Date: Fri 23 Oct 87 22:15:44
From: Ryan Hunter
To: Sean Barrett
Subj: wedding/handfasting ceremony

[The following wedding ceremony was written to provide for Pagans who must of necessity be wed in the presence of the uninitiated who are not pagan and are perhaps unaware that the bride and groom are pagan. Replace the words Bride and Groom below with the names of the happy couple. This ceremony was used by both my wife and myself and by my sister and her husband. They modified the text at the point below where it says "loving each other wholly and completely" to add the phrase "forsaking all others" as they are into monogamy. Either version works beautifully, I recommend the participants rewrite where necessary to form a legal contract that they can and will keep. It is easy to avoid being an oathbreaker if you only swear to that that you will keep and avoid swearing to something just because the other party wants it or because it might be "expected" by the family. Notice: parts of this ritual were cribbed from the writings of others. I apologise in advance for failure to reference sources but after the fifteenth rewrite we had forgotten where we got the text and what was and what was not original to us. I doubt if there are quotes from other sources longer than paragraph length and thus should not be a copyright problem. If you see something that is yours, please send me mail and I will reference you in the future. Our thanks to those who paved the way. --Ryan Hunter]

[PRIEST] We have come together here in celebration of the joining together of ____bride_____ and ____groom_____. There are many things to say about marriage. Much wisdom concerning the joining together of two souls,has come our way through all paths of belief, and from many cultures. With each union, more knowledge is gained and more wisdom gathered. Though we are unable to give all this knowledge to these two, who stand before us, we can hope to leave with them the knowledge of love and its strengths and the anticipation of the wisdom that comes with time. The law of life is love unto all beings. Without love, life is nothing, without love, death has no redemtion. Love is anterior to Life, posterior to Death, initial of Creation and the exponent of Earth. If we learn no more in life, let it be this.

Marriage is a bond to be entered into only after considerable thought and reflection. As with any aspect of life, it has its cycles, its ups and its downs, its trials and its triumphs. With full understanding of this, Groom and Bride have come here today to be joined as one in marriage.

Others would ask, at this time, who gives the bride in marriage, but, as a woman is not property to be bought and sold, given and taken, I ask simply if she comes of her own will and if she has her family's blessing.

Bride, is it true that you come of your own free will and

accord?

[BRIDE] Yes, it is true.

[PRIEST] With whom do you come and whose blessings accompany you.

[FATHER] She comes with me, her father, and is accompanied by all of her family's blessings.

[PRIEST] Please join hands with your betrothed and listen to that which I am about to say.

Above you are the stars, below you are the stones, as time doth pass, remember...

Like a stone should your love be firm like a star should your love be constant. Let the powers of the mind and of the intellect guide you in your marriage, let the strength of your wills bind you together, let the power of love and desire make you happy, and the strength of your dedication make you inseparable. Be close, but not too close. Possess one another, yet be understanding. Have patience with one another, for storms will come, but they will pass quickly.

Be free in giving affection and warmth. Have no fear and let not the ways of the unenlightened give you unease, for God is with you always.

Groom, I have not the right to bind thee to Bride, only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this time and place your ring in her hand.

[GROOM] It is my wish.

[PRIEST] Bride, if it be your wish for Groom to be bound to you, place the ring on his finger. (places ring on Groom's left ring finger)

Bride I have not the right to bind thee to Groom only you have this right. If it be your wish, say so at this time and place your ring in his hand.

[BRIDE] It is my wish.

[PRIEST] Groom, if it be your wish for Bride to be bound to you, place the ring on her finger.(places ring on Bride's left ring finger)

(to Groom) Repeat after me:

I, (grooms full name), in the name of the spirit of God that resides within us all, by the life that courses within my blood and the love that resides within my heart, take thee (bride's full name) to my hand, my heart, and my spirit, to be my

chosen one. To desire thee and be desired by thee, to possess thee, and be possessed by thee, without sin or shame, for naught can exist in the purity of my love for thee. I promise to love thee wholly and completely without restraint, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in poverty, in life and beyond, where we shall meet, remember, and love again. I shall not seek to change thee in any way. I shall respect thee, thy beliefs, thy people, and thy ways as I respect myself.

(to Bride)
I (bride's full name), in the name of the spirit of God that resides within us all, by the life that courses within my blood, and the love that resides within my heart, take thee, (Groom's full name) to my hand, my heart, and my spirit to be my chosen one. To desire and be desired by thee, to possess thee, and be possessed by thee, without sin or shame, for naught can exist in the purity of my love for thee. I promise to love thee wholly and completely without restraint, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in poverty, in life and beyond, where we shall meet, remember, and love again. I shall not seek to change thee in any way. I shall respect thee, thy beliefs, thy people, and thy ways as I respect myself.

[PRIEST]
(hands chalice to the groom, saying:) May you drink your fill from the cup of love.

(Groom holds chalice to bride while she sips then bride takes chalice and holds it to groom while he sips. The chalice is then handed back to the Priest who sets it on the table. Next the Priest takes the plate of bread, giving it to the groom. Same procedure repeated with bread, groom feeding bride and bride feeding groom.)

By the power vested in me by God and the State of Alabama, I now pronounce you husband and wife. May your love so endure that its flame remains a guiding light unto you.

Sean, I hope this helps. We really loved it. BTW, to all concerned, after severe problems, Fawn and I have rededicated ourselves to making our marriage happy and productive. Thanks to excellent counselling and a genuine desire on both our parts to succeed in our relationship, we have weathered (at least for now) our first major storm in our young (2 1/2 yrs.) marriage. These vows, and a carefull consideration of them have helped us.
Blessed be,
- Ryan

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 * Origin: Liberty BBS (Opus 1:18/17)